



April 2020
Nisan/Iyar 5780

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THE SCHRIER

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF WEST PASCO
Home of Congregation Beth Tefillah

IMPORTANT MESSAGE...PLEASE READ

In accordance with Federal and local guidelines to fight the coronavirus pandemic, your JCC Board made the very difficult decision to suspend ALL activities at the JCC until further notice. This includes all religious services, Religious School, adult education, bingo and the annual second Seder. If you have made a reservation for the Seder and have paid for it, you can request a refund by calling the office (which will have limited hours).

Our Spiritual Leader, Ron Becker, will conduct Friday night services online. Please see his message on page 3 which contains instructions on how to view the services.

As bingo is included in the canceled events, our major source of funding is shut down for the foreseeable future. If you can make a donation to help tide us over during these uncertain times, it will be most appreciated.

Until we get the 'all clear' from the CDC, be safe and check in on those in our congregational family (via phone). We are not alone. We are all in this together.

APRIL HIGHLIGHTS

- * **Wednesday, 4/8 Fast of the First Born**
- * **Wednesday, 4/8 First Seder (at home)**
- * **Thursday, 4/9 Second Seder (at home)**
- * **Monday, 4/13 7 pm JCC Board Meeting**
- * **Friday & Saturday, 4/24 & 4/25 Rosh Chodesh**

SHABBAT SERVICES:

Conducted by Ron Becker and Elliot Shapiro

EVERY FRIDAY EVENING AT 7:30 PM

EVERY SATURDAY MORNING AT 9:30 AM

Alan Goldberg, Rabbi Emeritus

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - by Eileen Hochstadt

My Jewish Learning had a great piece today, Thursday, March 12th 2020 by Rabbi Shawn Zevit. I would like to share it with you today:

Adonai Eloheichem Emet: Finding Truth in Our Time

The concluding words of the Shema prayer call us together as a people and as humanity

“The Shema prayer begins with the declaration that our experience of Jewish peoplehood and divinity is the universal source of life. It concludes with three words: Adonai Eloheichem Emet (The Lord, your G-d, is truth). Or as I like to translate it, “the Breath of Life is our Source.”

Whatever name we use to express the ineffable mystery — life itself, the source of consciousness, the divine, G-d, Shechinah — is where truth can be found. Truth is what calls us together as a people and as humanity.

I always wanted a tune for these concluding words that matched the grandness of our collective voices at the beginning of the prayer, where we chant the composer Solomon Sulzer’s popular melody. The longing to express this truth as a mirror of the initial call of Shema inspired me to compose a melody and interpret the text on my first CD “Heart and Soul.”

You shall love your G-D
For you are a spark of the Divine
You shall love each other as yourself
You shall love the stranger
For you have drifted too
Let love for all fill your heart
When you pray: YAH Eloheichem Emet

“I call the Universe to witness today
Life and death I set before you”
Into our hands are the blessing and the curse
Choose life and see blessings in our time
Choose life so those we love may be blessed
When you say: YAH Eloheichem Emet

The Shema starts with a declaration that the oneness of existence is Israel’s compass, but it concludes with these words that invite us into a personal experience from which we can draw hope and faith even in the *harshesht of times*. In this Midrash, the rabbis affirm that we have multiple access points to this unity depending on the context and the historical moment.

These words can guide each of us to the truth of our time that is the foundation and the guiding compass of love, justice, compassion and action in our lives today — and every day.

Respectfully Submitted, Eileen M Hochstadt

DATES TO REMEMBER

4/8	Fast of the First Born First Seder (at home)
4/9	Second Seder (at home)
4/13	JCC Board Meeting 7 pm
4/24	Rosh Chodesh
4/25	Rosh Chodesh

Candle Lighting Times

April 3	7:32 p.m.
April 10	7:36 p.m.
April 17	7:40 p.m.
April 24	7:44 p.m.

A Message from Ron Becker

Dear friends,

We are living through very difficult times and with faith, good sense, and proper precautions, we hope to not only persevere through the month of April and perhaps beyond, but also continue to study, pray, and provide community activities albeit more remotely than usual. Unfortunately, we are not permitted to gather in large groups, so our Board made the difficult decision to close our synagogue building until the Corona virus crisis is abated. Thus, we will not hold traditional services, classes, and other activities including bingo for the foreseeable future. This is especially painful during this time of year as we need to cancel the community seder on the second night of Passover. However, during this period, I will be leading a Friday evening service which includes my weekly d'var Torah which you can access by logging in to your Facebook page at 7:30 pm each Friday evening and look for a post that says "JCC is now live" and click on that link. Or you can go directly to the JCC West Pasco Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/JCCWestPascoBethTefillah> and watch the service as it is happening. If you miss the live feed, you can access the service afterward at our website at <https://www.jccwestpasco.com/> and then clicking on the video link.

Also, please feel free to e-mail or call me at any time.

We are not permitted to say Kaddish in memory of our loved ones (my dear late son Nathan's yahrzeit is on the 2nd day of Nisan), the Rabbinical Assembly of the Conservative movement suggests the following prayer which we will chant every Friday evening

Master of the world, G-d of the spirit of all flesh, it is revealed and known before You that it is my fervent desire to praise Your name, and to remember and honor my beloved: father/mother/son/daughter/ husband/wife/partner/brother/sister/ _____ [the name and relation of the person may be inserted] by reciting the Mourner's Kaddish in the company of a minyan. Though circumstances prevent me from doing so, may my yearning and prayers find favor in Your eyes, and be accepted and received before You as if I had prayed that Kaddish. May you grant hope and healing to all who suffer, and may we soon be able to once again safely gather in holiness and joy. May Your name, Adonai, be elevated and sanctified everywhere on earth and may peace reign everywhere.

While we are spending more time in our homes, please keep in mind those that are feeling social isolation or might be ill (the mishabeyrach list is in this month's *Schrier*). It is important that we support those who are most vulnerable during times like these and often the most critical need is to provide human contact. A simple phone call will grow a very long way to help fight depression and anxiety in our community. Also, continue to reach out to your friends and family with a human voice!

Also, think back at what a wonderful year this has been at our JCC community. We celebrated our first wedding in many years and another milestone birthday of our beloved matriarch Mary Gaines; we celebrated Purim with great comradery and joy eating ice cream, home-baked hamantaschen and other goodies. Then we all fully participated in the reading of the Book of Esther including Rabbi Al's amazing chanting of the names of the ten sons of the wicked Haman in one breath, an incredible accomplishment! We have studied more than half of the 613 mitzvot at our adult education class and are preparing a young woman for her Bat Mitzvah which will take place a year from now. We are also looking forward to celebrating Barbara D. Johnson as our honoree at the Women of Distinction event still scheduled to take place on May 3rd in Clearwater. So, although we are experiencing a health crisis that none of us has faced before, we have much to appreciate and to look forward to.

Hopefully, if the Center for Disease Control and federal and state restrictions are effective, we will be back together again soon. Stay tuned for updates at least weekly and take care of yourselves and your friends and family. You are always in Chris's and my thoughts.

Ron Becker, Spiritual Leader

Happy 102nd, Mary!



Pictures by B. D. Johnson



DINE OUT CLUB

The Dine Out Club will not meet in April due to the observance of Passover. See you in May!

WOMEN OF DISTINCTION

The Jewish Community Center of West Pasco, Congregation Beth Tefillah is happy and proud to nominate Barbara D. Johnson as our Woman of Distinction. Barbara is our current Recording Secretary on the Board of Directors and our Webmaster. She has transformed our Website into an attractive and informative form. Along with three other JCC members, Barbara celebrated her B'nai Mitzvot in October. Barbara has always been quick to volunteer when any need arose. Congratulations, Barbara!

The Women Of Distinction program will take place on Sunday, May 3rd at the Gathering Place-Suncoast Empath Health, 5771 Roosevelt Blvd. in Clearwater (the same place as last year). The cost is \$36.00 per person. Let's have a great turnout and cheer Barbara as she receives this well-deserved award.



Religious School Report

We are getting geared up for Passover! The plan is to concentrate on the four questions and why we, as Jews, celebrate Passover every year.

Should be an interesting month...

Eileen



Purim 5780
Pictures by B. D. Johnson



In last month's D'Var Torah, Ron Becker made a powerful message about the importance of synagogues. It is repeated here for those who might have missed it.

Do we need a place to pray? D'Var Torah---February 28th 29th – Parashat Terumah

In the three and a half years that I have served as your spiritual leader, I have had many opportunities to discuss the importance of a religious home for us to gather for prayer, to celebrate life cycle events, to study, to socialize, to plan community activities and generally to be with each other. Of course, we know that G-d is everywhere and that we can worship Hashem anywhere and any-time, not just at proscribed times in a proscribed place. However, without the physical structure of the synagogue and the Jewish community center, it is nearly impossible to be a real community that prays, plays, and serves the congregation and the community around us. Without the shul, we are just a dispirit group of individuals. As individuals, we might be pious and inclined to do only good deeds, but we don't have a place to do it as part of a religious community.

Of course, as committed shul members and shul goers, it's always great to reinforce our desire to build and serve houses of worship and that is the theme of this Shabbat. Our Torah reading focuses on the building of the Mishkan, the portable Tabernacle that contained the Torah and that traveled with the Hebrew nation throughout wandering through the wilderness for 40 years before entering the promised land. The Mishkan is incredibly ornate and the specifications for its structure and decorations are exactly precise. And then in our Haftorah from the Book of Kings, we read the detailed description of the building of the Temple in Jerusalem by King Solomon, a structure unique in the architectural history of the world and the focus of Judaism until its destruction by the Babylonians and then the Romans. Just by reading the Torah and the Prophets, we learn how important "structure" is to our religion, and indeed to all religions. Without the Temple, the Hebrew nation was dispersed throughout the western world and remains dispersed to this day.

In Israel as well as here in the diaspora, we no longer have a Temple and we no longer (and no longer want to) sacrifice animals to Adonoi. However, we are essentially united as a Jewish people by our institutions---by our synagogues, community centers, schools, recreation and residential centers, and other structures. Instead of being carried about like the portable Mishkan or residing in the holy Temple in only one place---the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, we now have synagogues to house our Torahs and other holy objects. It is especially in our synagogues that we are able to build a holy society that prays, learns, and is called to action whenever needed for the congregation and the community. Without it, we can still be moral human beings that perform good deeds, but we cannot be a spiritual nation.

So what do we tell our co-religionists who although they consider themselves to be Jewish and often want to do this "Jewishly" but don't believe in being part of a synagogue? How many times have we heard the expression "why should I pay to pray?" Here in Pasco County, we have hundreds of unaffiliated families. I meet many of them when they need our services for life cycle events---happy ones like baby-namings and our community Passover seders, sober ones like visiting the sick at the local hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living centers, and sad ones like funerals, shiva minyanim, and unveilings. Our JCC NEVER denies these services to anyone who needs them, but I feel it necessary to remind those who use them that if we don't expand our membership, we might not be there for them and for others in need sometime in the future. We NEED our physical structure in order to maintain our community and serve each other and also those who don't support us, but need us. So let us all do what we can to convince our neighbors of the importance of community whether they are "prayers" or "payers" or neither. You don't have to attend every religious service or class or sponsored event to be a member. You only have to help with dues and/or volunteer duties to keep the Jewish religion alive in West Pasco and throughout the world.

Shabbat Shalom!

Our Next Generation of Hamentashen Makers

Photos by Eileen Hochstadt



April 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 88 7:32 pm	4 <i>Tzav</i>
5	6	7	8 88 Fast of the 1st Born 1st Seder (at home) Erev Passover	9 88 2nd Seder (at home) Passover 1st Day	10 88 7:36 pm Passover 2nd Day	11 Chol Hamoed
12	13 JCC Board Meeting 7 pm	14 88	15 88	16 Passover 8th Day	17 88 7:40 pm	18 <i>Shemini</i>
Chol Hamoed	Chol Hamoed	Chol Hamoed	Passover 7th Day	Passover 8th Day		
19	20	21	22	23	24 88 7:44 pm	25 <i>Yazria-Metzora</i> Rosh Chodesh
26	27	28	29	30		